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SUBJECT: FM LAM AKOL: U.S. SHOULD WORK WITH GNU TO IMPROVE
BILATERAL RELATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol told AMB Khalilzad in an October 2 tte--tte that the U.S. should work with the Government of National Unity on a set of specific steps to improve U.S.-Sudan bilateral relations. FM Akol argued that Khartoum's ability to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is linked to the unfolding of U.S. policy on Darfur. FM Akol criticized what he viewed as U.S. efforts to encourage dissent within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and argued that the interests of southern Sudanese are better served by the GNU than any of the most likely alternatives. END SUMMARY.

GNU Wants Specific Steps to
Improve U.S.- Sudan Relations

¶2. (C) FM Lam Akol told AMB Khalilzad in a October 3 meeting that despite substantial progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Government of National Unity's (GNU) commitment to the full implementation of UNSCR 1769, the U.S. remained hostile to the Sudan. Akol cited the Sudan's continued listing as a state sponsor of terror and bilateral U.S. sanctions regimes as examples of American intransigence and hostility. Akol argued that the refusal of the U.S. to engage in substantive discussions on improving U.S.-Sudan relations has limited the GNU's ability to move forward with CPA implementation. Akol said Sudan is sincerely interested in improving bilateral relations and urged the Washington to engage with the GNU on creating a set of "specific, reciprocal steps" that would lead to improved bilateral relations.

Don't Forget the South

¶3. (C) Akol said U.S. should be careful not to neglect the interests of Southern Sudan or send any messages that might encourage partition. Akol criticized what he described as "mixed messaging" coming from the U.S. on Sudanese national unity. The GNU leadership in Khartoum perceived a U.S. desire to "fragment" North and South Sudan. Without enhanced diplomatic engagement and support for CPA implementation, the likely result of the 2011 referendum would be partition. Akol argued that this would ultimately be bad for all Sudanese. He urged the U.S. to take steps to assuage Khartoum by refraining from any diplomatic overtures that would inflame tensions between the GNU leadership in Khartoum

and the GOSS leadership in Juba.

Akol: U.S. Seeking
to Split SPLM?

¶4. (S) Akol criticized what he viewed as U.S. overtures to SPLM leaders based in Juba aimed at undermining his leadership of the movement. (NOTE: Akol did not provide any specific details on the U.S. efforts he referred to. END NOTE.) Any attempt to turn SPLM into an "American tool" would ultimately undermine the movement by lessening its influence in the GNU. Akol said the Khartoum leadership still feared that the U.S. is seeking "regime change," adding that it would not be in the interests of SPLM to overthrow the National Congress Party's control of the government. He claimed that any attempt at regime change would hurt the Southern Sudanese because the most likely alternatives to President Bashir, Hassan al-Turrabi and Sadiq al-Mahdi, are deeply hostile to the interests of Southern Sudanese. Rather, the GNU is the best hope for a unified, peaceful Sudan.

KHALILZAD